Authentication information 220 is also useful for tracking fraudulent uses of the tickets that are purchased online. For example, if a counterfeit ticket is presented for admission at a ticketed event, the original ticket purchaser can be tracked by referencing the corresponding user profile and account information. An identified ticket purchaser can then be questioned help determine the origin of the counterfeit ticket. A user profile can also be modified at the database 170 to deny that user subsequent online purchases until a disputed matter is resolved.

It should be appreciated that the present invention provides a useful method for creating tickets online. In particular, the present invention enables a user to purchase uniquely identifiable tickets over the Internet at any time of the day or night. Tickets created according to the invention can also be authenticated and redeemed for admission to a ticketed event in a manner that preserves the integrity of online ticketing process by discouraging counterfeiting of the purchased tickets. Other advantages and benefits of the invention should be apparent from the disclosure that is provided herein.

The present invention may be embodied in other specific forms without departing from its spirit or essential characteristics. The described embodiments are to be considered in all respects only as illustrative and not restrictive.

What is claimed and desired to be secured by United States Letters Patent is:

1.   In a server system that communicates with a remote computer system over a network, a method of interactively creating a ticket that is redeemable for admission at a ticketed event, the method comprising the acts of:

transmitting to the remote computer system a menu that comprises ticket information associated with at least one ticketed event, wherein the menu is displayed on the remote computer system;

receiving from the remote computer system user input that is entered at the remote computer system by a user selecting ticket information;

creating a ticket for admission to the ticketed event in response to the user input, the ticket comprising ticketed event information and ticket authentication information; and

transmitting an electronic image of the ticket to the remote computer system.

2.   A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the act of storing a copy of ticket authentication information in a database of the server system.

3.   A method as defined in claim 2, wherein the method further comprises the act of transmitting the ticket authentication information to an entity that redeems tickets for admission to the ticketed event.

4.   A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the menu comprises ticket information associated with a plurality of ticketed events operated by a plurality of entities that redeem tickets for admission to the plurality of ticketed events.

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5.   A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the method further comprises the act of transmitting an email message to the user regarding the ticket and the ticketed event.

6.   A method as defined in claim 5, wherein the method further comprises the act of printing a copy of the ticket at the remote computer system.

7.   A method as defined in claim 6, wherein the ticket comprises a counterfeit deterrent that operates to prevent a redeemable ticket from being produced by the act of photocopying the printed ticket, such that the act of printing a copy of the ticket at the remote computer system includes the act of printing the counterfeit deterrent on the printed copy of the ticket.

8.   A method as defined in claim 7, wherein the counterfeit deterrent includes a transparent image, such that a photocopy image of the counterfeit deterrent comprises a comprises a substantially opaque image.

9.   A method as defined in claim 1, wherein the authentication information is included in at least one barcode on the ticket.

10.   A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the authentication information comprises an event identification number.

11.   A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the authentication information comprises an incremental count number.

12. A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the authentication information comprises a random number.

13. A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the authentication information comprises user input.

14. A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the at least one barcode comprises at least one of either a Code 39 barcode and a PDF-417 barcode.

15. A method as defined in claim 9, wherein the at least one barcode comprises a Code 39 barcode and a PDF-417 barcode.

16. In a computer system that communicates with a remote server system over a network, a method of interactively creating a ticket that is redeemable for admission at a ticket event, the method comprising the acts of:

receiving from the remote server system a menu that comprises ticket information associated with at least one ticketed event;

displaying the menu on a display of the computer system;

receiving user input that is entered by a user selecting ticket information;

transmitting the user input to the remote server system;

receiving from the remote server system an electronic image of a ticket that is created at the server system in response to the user input, the ticket comprising ticketed event information and ticket authentication information; and

printing a copy of the ticket on a tangible medium, wherein the printed ticket is redeemable for admission at the ticketed event.

17. A method as defined in claim 16, wherein the authentication information is included in at least one barcode on the ticket.

18. A method as defined in claim 17, wherein the at least one barcode comprises at least one of either a Code 39 barcode and a PDF-417 barcode.

19. A method as defined in claim 17, wherein the at least one barcode comprises a Code 39 barcode and a PDF-417 barcode.

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20.   A method as defined in claim 19, wherein the authentication information comprises at least one of an event identification number, an incremental count number, a random number, and user input.

21.   A method as defined in claim 20, wherein the ticket further comprises a counterfeit deterrent, and wherein the counterfeit deterrent includes a transparent image, such that a photocopy image of the counterfeit deterrent comprises a substantially opaque image.

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22.   A method for redeeming a ticket that is interactively created at a remote server system in response to user input that is entered by a user at a user computer system, the method comprising the acts of:

at the user computer system, receiving over the Internet an electronic image of the ticket from the remote server system, the ticket comprising ticketed event information and ticket authentication information;

at the user computer system, printing a copy of the ticket on a tangible medium;

at an event computer system, reading the ticketed event information and ticket authentication information that is located on the ticket; and

upon determining that the ticketed event information and ticket authentication information is valid, redeeming the ticket for admission.

23.   A method as defined in claim 22, wherein the method further comprises the act of receiving at the event computer system a copy of the ticket authentication information.

24.   A method as defined in claim 23, wherein the copy of the ticket authentication information is stored in a database, such that the act of receiving the copy of the ticket authentication information comprises the act of accessing the database.

25.   A method as defined in claim 24, wherein the database is connected to the remote server system, and wherein the act of accessing the database comprises the act of accessing the database over a network connection between the event computer system and the remote server system.

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26.   A method as defined in claim 24, wherein the database is connected only to the event computer system.

27.   A method as defined in claim 24, wherein the act of determining that the ticket authentication information is valid, comprises the act of comparing ticket authentication information located on the ticket with the ticket authentication information accessed from the database.

28.   A method as defined in claim 27, wherein ticket authentication information located on the ticket is contained in at least one of a Code 39 barcode and a PDF-417 barcode, and wherein the ticket authentication information comprises at least one of an event identification number, an incremental count number, a random number, and user input.

29.   A method as defined in claim 29, wherein the act of determining that the ticket authentication information is valid, further comprises the act of comparing ticket authentication information with information provided by a user.

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30. A method for authenticating a ticket that is generated at a remote server system in response to user input that is entered by a user at a user computer system, the method comprising the acts of:

at the user computer system, receiving over the Internet an electronic image of the ticket from the remote server system, the ticket comprising ticketed event information and ticket authentication information;

at the remote server system, storing a copy of the ticket authentication information in a remote server system database;

at the computer system, printing a copy of the ticket on a tangible medium;

at an event computer system operated by an entity that redeems tickets for admission to the event, accessing the ticket authentication information from the remote server system database;

at the event computer system, authenticating the ticket by matching the ticket authentication information on the ticket with the ticket authentication information that is accessed from the remote server system database; and

at the event computer system, redeeming the authenticated ticket for admission.

31. A method as defined in claim 30, wherein the act of accessing the ticket authentication information from the remote server system database comprises the act of receiving and loading a file from a disk, wherein the file comprises an electronic copy of the authentication information from the remote server system database.

32.   A method as defined in claim 30, wherein the act of accessing the ticket authentication information from the remote server system database comprises the act of the event computer system accessing the remote server system database over a network connection between the event computer system and the remote server system.

33.   A method as defined in claim 32, wherein the act of authenticating the ticket is performed while the event computer system is not engaged in network communication with the remote server system.

34.   A method as defined in claim 33, wherein the act of determining that the ticket authentication information is valid, comprises the act of comparing ticket authentication information located on the ticket with the ticket authentication information accessed from the remote server system database.

35.   A method as defined in claim 34, wherein ticket authentication information located on the ticket is contained in at least one of a Code 39 barcode and a PDF-417 barcode, and wherein the ticket authentication information comprises at least one of an event identification number, an incremental count number, a random number, and user input.